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GEORGE WASHINGTON
AT
Mount Vernon on the Potomac

TO GIVE A CLEARER IDEA OF THE CHARACTER
OF WASHINGTON IS TO SET A HIGHER
STANDARD FOR AMERICAN
PATRIOTISM

PUBLISHED BY THE
MOUNT VERNON LADIES' ASSOCIATION OF THE UNION,
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1921

**TO THE REGENTS
OF THE
Mount Vernon Ladies' Association of the Union,**

MISS ANN PAMELA CUNNINGHAM

MRS. LILY M. BERGHMAN

MRS. JUSTINE VAN RENSSELAER TOWNSEND

MISS HARRIET CLAYTON COMEGYS

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George Washington

AT

Mount Vernon on the Potomac

James Hosmer Penniman, Litt.D.

On the Potomac, a few miles below the city of Washington, has been standing for nearly two centuries a mansion which is a shrine of humanity, for Mount Vernon is more than a national memorial. Vessels from all parts of the world dip their colors and toll their bells as they pass the place, and distinguished pilgrims of many races lay wreaths at the tomb of him who devoted all he was and all he had to making freedom secure for mankind.

George Washington, Mount Vernon, Potomac; what other three names can be found so closely associated and of such euphony and historic importance! There is no exaggeration in saying that Mount Vernon is the most famous home in the world. Nowhere else do we get so close to such an illustrious man. The mansions in which Washington lived as President, in New York and Philadelphia, have long ago been torn down, for there was no Ann-Pamela Gunningham to protect them. At Cambridge, Harlem, Newburgh, Morristown and Valley Forge we are fortunate in having his headquarters still preserved; but in these places he was General Washington, Commander-in-Chief. It is at Mount Vernon alone that Washington comes down from his heroic pedestal and reveals himself to us in the majestic simplicity of the Virginia farmer, the Cincinnatus of the West. Soldiers of both sides remem-

bered only that they were Americans as they stood at the tomb of the great American during that fratricidal war which would have caused him so much grief. Sectional feeling has no place at the home of this Virginian, who became the first American in every sense of the word first. The expression "First in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen," falls glibly enough from our lips, but at Mount Vernon one should ponder on these words and consider in how many ways this great man was first. "First in war," he was always the central figure during the eight years of the Revolution, but even before he was Commander-in-Chief he was first in war, as well as the first American, when he made what is considered the most eloquent speech in our history: "I will raise a thousand men at my own expense and march at their head to the relief of Boston." March Virginians to the relief of Boston! Show me if you can an earlier expression of more practical Americanism. How did he know that he could get those men? Because he was assured of the devotion and patriotism of his neighbors, to many of whom he was always the widow Washington's boy "George." How Washington's heart warmed to those riflemen at Cambridge when they told him they were from the right bank of the Potomac! At Mount Vernon, where Washington was pre-eminently "First in Peace," the old weather-vane which surmounts his mansion is appropriately the dove bearing the olive branch.

Washington was not common clay, nor is Mount Vernon common earth. He could not have been such a patriot if he had not loved the place so much, because affection for the actual ground and wood and stone of the home is the most natural foundation of love of country.

The Mount Vernon Ladies' Association, incorporated in 1856, is the oldest patriotic organization of

women in the United States. Until Mount Vernon came into its possession the estate had had no other owners but Washingtons. The far-seeing founder of the Association, Ann Pamela Cunningham, who held the office of Regent for twenty years, wrote in 1874:

“Ladies, the home of Washington is in your charge; see to it that you keep it the home of Washington. Let no irreverent hand change it; no vandal hands desecrate it with the fingers of progress! Those who go to the home in which he lived and died, wish to see in what he lived and died! Let one spot in this grand country of ours be saved from change! Upon you rests this duty. When the Centennial comes, bringing with it its thousands from the ends of the earth, to whom the home of Washington will be the *place of places* in our country, let them see that, though we slay our forests, remove our dead, pull down our churches, remove from home to home till the hearth-stone seems to have no resting-place in America—let them see that we do know how to care for the home of our Hero!”

Wisely directed energy, unselfish devotion, and reverent patriotism—these conspicuous qualities of Washington have been manifested in an eminent degree by the Ladies of Mount Vernon in making permanent for us his hallowed shrine. Long continued and loving care is everywhere evident, but the extent of the work has been carefully concealed. Nothing is offensively new, and this is remarkable, because it has been necessary to do so much. When the ladies acquired the property the estate was run down and the mansion was nearly empty. Edward Everett said in 1858: “No one who has visited the venerable spot—who has looked upon the weather-beaten building and its uninviting approaches, upon the falling columns and corroded

pavement of the portico, the ruinous offices, the unfloored summer-house; the conservatory, of which a portion remains as it was left by the fire of 1832; the

'spot where once a garden smiled,
And still where many a garden flower grows wild,'

the ground relapsing into the roughness of nature; and, above all, the raw incompleteness, the irreverent exposure, and the premature and untidy decay that reign about the tomb—but must bid God-speed to the efforts of these noble women and their worthy sisters in every part of the land, who have determined that this public scandal, this burning shame, shall cease." The mansion and its surrounding buildings were uninhabitable. The roof of the portico had to be held up by temporary props throughout its entire length. The barn had not been roofed since the time of Washington, the roads were impassable, and the whole estate was a chaotic ruin. The two rules of the Mount Vernon Ladies were: no debts and do thoroughly whatever is to be done; and, so carefully were these observed, that in 1890 the Secretary of the Association was able to refer to "the little band of women who have quietly worked through all these years, and who have learned that woman's lesson is to 'sit and wait.' As we have 'waited' we have seen our beloved Mount Vernon grow in grace and beauty slowly but surely—here a nail and there a brick, to-day a bit of pavement, to-morrow a road, now a fence, again a roof—until now! Now, every ruin is gone, every building restored."

Reassembling the original furniture and relics is, to my mind, the most wonderful of all the things that the Ladies of Mount Vernon have done. They have made the mansion a museum of priceless treasures, and it is the duty of patriotic Americans to see to it that everything that used to be at Mount Vernon is returned

there. A further idea of the extraordinary work of the ladies may be formed from the following instances of it: To prevent landslides, which caused anxiety even in Washington's time, the hill has been tunnelled and twenty thousand gallons of water a day are drawn off. Washington remarked that the Mount Vernon land has "an understratum of hard clay impervious to water, which, penetrating that far and unable to descend lower, sweeps off the upper soil." Washington was anxious about the possibility of fire at Mount Vernon, and that his fears were not without cause is shown by an entry in his diary, January 5, 1788: "About 8 o'clock in the evening we were alarmed, and the house a good deal endangered by the soot of one of the chimneys taking fire and burning furiously, discharging great flakes of fire on the roof; but, happily, by having aid at hand and proper exertion no damage ensued." He wrote his overseer: "I beg you will make my people (about the Mansion house) be careful of the fire; for it is no uncommon thing for them to be running from one house to another in cold, windy nights with sparks of fire flying and dropping as they go along, without paying the least attention to the consequences." The Ladies of Mount Vernon have taken every precaution to make the mansion as secure from fire as a wooden structure can be. The buildings are warmed by the hot water system, and the mains come from a remote underground boiler-room. Mr. Edison himself directed the low voltage lights. Chemical and steam fire engines are ready for instant use, and guards maintain a constant vigil. Powerful electric pumps supply water from an artesian well and there is sanitary drainage. The marsh of twelve acres, malaria from which made it necessary for the Washingtons to consume much Peruvian bark, has been made a meadow filled with clover, and the river has been excluded and the shores protected

from erosion by a sea wall. In order to get bricks mellowed by age for the haha wall, they were brought from the ruins of another old mansion. Flagstones have been imported from the quarries of Lord Lonsdale, at St. Bees Head, near White Haven, England, whence Washington obtained the original stones, and an extra supply was secured to provide for future needs.

Well might the Ladies of Mount Vernon adopt Washington's motto, *Exitus acta probat*, for the result has proved the excellence of their deeds. I have visited many of the show places of the world, and I do not know another where good taste has been so combined with business efficiency. There is abundant elegance and refinement, but the predominant impression is that everything is intended to serve a useful purpose and is adequate for the work. Mount Vernon does not look, as so many old places do, as if it had outlived its usefulness, and in fact its usefulness will always be of the highest order. Without the noble deeds which were planned here the beautiful buildings of our national capital would never have existed, and those who see the work of our government going on at Washington will always find patriotic inspiration in visiting the home of the man who, more than any other, set these mighty forces at work.

When one's mind has become steeped in cosmopolitan ideas by a protracted stay in Europe, there is nothing which will restore him to wholesome Americanism more thoroughly than a few hours at Mount Vernon. Nowhere can Emerson's tumultuous privacy of storm be employed to better advantage, for on a stormy day visitors are few and you may examine the relics at your leisure. You will get closer to George Washington and to the old life of the place when you are almost alone, but you do not know Mount Vernon until you have

seen it in rain and in sunshine, in winter and in summer, in the morning and with the lengthening shadows of the afternoon. The mansion is kept in such perfect condition that it gives no indication of having endured the storms of so many years. Yet you are surrounded by the atmosphere of the eighteenth century, that age of silk stockings, lace cuffs, powdered hair and stately manners, so that one almost expects to see Lady Washington drive up with her coach and four. Life at Mount Vernon, though simple, was in the grand style; and the mansion, too, is simple, but with an air of elegance to a certain extent its own, for it is not entirely derived from its association with its illustrious proprietor. The seclusion of Mount Vernon imparts distinction. You cannot take it at unawares; you must approach it as you would some stately personage. The mansion is unique in situation as well as in design. There is no more eligible site in the whole course of the beautiful Potomac, and I have never seen a building which resembled it. Exquisite in itself merely as a beautiful old villa, it is superb in what one can think into it if he has the creative imagination to restore the past.

Though rich in memories, they are all noble; there is no skeleton in the closet and no ghost. Listen to what the old house has to tell you, for it is silently eloquent. As you walk through these rooms you are turning the pages of history. No other private residence in the world is so permeated with the annals of a great nation, and its associations are all the result of the life work of one great man. In the importance of the deliberations and of the anxious thought given here to the most vital interests of our country and of mankind, Mount Vernon ranks with Carpenters and Independence Halls. Here the ablest men came to confer with Washington. In the library he drafted historic

documents and wrote hundreds of letters of the utmost importance to our country. It adds interest to the reading of a letter of Washington to be able to picture him as he wrote it in his library. When you read his letters you get close to the man himself, as if you grasped that mighty hand and looked into those brave, blue eyes.

At Mount Vernon was good living, in all the senses of the words. There were good thoughts, good companions, good books and good dinners. Stevenson might have been describing Mount Vernon when he wrote—

"Flowers in the garden, meat in the hall,
A bin of wine, a spice of wit,
A house with lawns inclosing it,
A living river by the door."

Though the Gréat House was remote from the main road, far within his own domains, Washington wrote, "Captain Johnson comes past my door in his ship." So Washington lived in a house by the side of the road to the Old World, and he was a friend to man.

The tranquil river, bending in great curves and like a long mirror reflecting the light for miles, gave the same dignity and grace to the landscape when he gazed lovingly upon it from the shade of his own vine and fig-tree, but the glory of the historic past now radiates from the stream, as if it was proud of its association with Washington. He was familiar with the varied sections whence came every drop that flows past his home, for in his mind he could follow the river beyond its Great Falls and Harpers Ferry all the way to its source, and in his youth he made many surveys along its beautiful tributary, the Shenandoah. The problems of the utilization of the Potomac occupied much of the time and thought of his later years. On its banks he was born and died. It flows past the beautiful city which bears his name, and circles his sky-piercing monument, which over-

looks so many miles of its course. The waves of the Potomac kiss the shores of his home and murmur their perpetual requiem about his tomb.

We must visit Mount Vernon to know the real Washington, and, to know him as we ought, we should visit it many times and read and re-read his works, for the more we know of Washington the more we appreciate his home. There have been thousands of books written about Washington, but the best will always be those he wrote himself, and these are the ones which are read the least. We should hear less about the hatchet and the cherry-tree and other myths, and we should be better Americans if we read as much as we can of what Washington himself has written; for, in so doing, we not only become acquainted with the first American, but we also learn how our country was made a nation. How little the average visitor knows of the life of Washington is evidenced by the frequent request at Mount Vernon to be shown the room in which he was born. Few remember that Washington, as his father had done before him, saw the light at Wakefield, on the Potomac, fifty miles below Mount Vernon. Nine out of ten of the hundreds of biographers, including Sparks and Irving, state that soon after the birth of George his family removed to an estate opposite Fredericksburg; but the Vestry Book of Pohick Church states: November 18, 1735, Augustine Washington, the father of George, was sworn in as vestryman and attended meetings August 18, 1736, August 13, 1737, and October 3, 1737, after which his name does not appear. It is thus clear that at this time the family resided at Hunting Creek, as Mount Vernon was then called. Augustine Washington was marked absent from vestry meetings held October 11, 1736, and April 12, 1737. I am able to explain his absence by something which has not hitherto been noted, which throws much light on this important period about which we have

known so little. In the Boston Athenæum is a book called "A Complete View of the British Customs." It contains a list of the several ports and creeks of Great Britain, the lawful keys, wharfs, etc., and fees payable. On the fly-leaf is written "Augustine Washington his Book bought ye 4th of May 1737 of ye Booksellers under ye Royal Exchange. Cost 7 Shillings." If this book could talk it would doubtless tell us that George Washington's father commanded and owned a ship in which he carried the productions of Mount Vernon to England, and in a previous voyage he probably brought back the bricks for the barn, the only existing building which dates from this period. Excellent bricks were made in Virginia, and a few years later we shall see that sixteen thousand of them were baked for the underpinning of Mount Vernon. That the tobacco ships came back ballasted with brick and stone shows that the colonists were too poor to import much from the mother country. The house occupied by Augustine Washington and his family was burned in 1739. The fact that there is a well in the cellar of the present mansion leads me to believe that the original house occupied the same site, for the well must have been intended for use in case of an attack by Indians. By a deed recorded in October, 1740, Augustine Washington conveyed to his son Lawrence the 2500 acres of land at Hunting Creek, which was later called Mount Vernon. In August, 1740, Lawrence Washington embarked to join Admiral Vernon in the West Indies. From Jamaica, May 30, 1741, Lawrence wrote his father, "I hope my lotts are secured, which, if I return, shall make use of as my dwelling." He did not return until the spring of 1743, and on the 19th of July was married to Anne Fairfax. It is difficult to understand how Lawrence could have given attention to the building of the original central part of the mansion at this time, and it seems more reasonable to

attribute its construction to the loving care of Augustine for his son, who was to be married as soon as his military service was over, and to suppose that Augustine alluded to these facts when he had cut on the corner stone the initials L. W. with the heart and the military axes. Augustine died April 28, 1743. His will was executed April 11th, and was presented for probate by Lawrence May 6th following. It begins: "I Augustine Washington of the County of King George—Gentleman being sick and weak but of perfect and disposing sence and memory;" and the first provision gives Lawrence "the land at Hunting Creek with the water mill adjoining and all the Slaves, Cattle and Stocks and all the Household Furniture whatsoever now in and upon or which have been commonly possessed by my said son." The words "which have been commonly possessed by my said son" should be carefully pondered over, as they seem to throw light on this important but obscure period in the history of the mansion.

When Lawrence called his estate Mount Vernon he not only showed his affection for his old chief, Admiral Vernon, but also that loyalty to England which caused the people of Alexandria to name their streets King, Prince, Duke, Royal, Queen, Princess, Duchess. The construction of the Great House went on at intervals during most of George Washington's life, nor did he consider it finished when he died. Augustine, Lawrence and George were probably its only architects. George was always fond of drawing plans and would have been as good an architect as he was surveyor. You may restore the house to its condition in Lawrence's time by, in your imagination, removing the portico, the colonnades, the third story, the banquet hall, the library, and replacing with a few cabins all the out-buildings except the barn. The mansion will be left about one-third of its present size, with two stories and a

garret with gable roof and dormer windows. There were four rooms on each floor, a small porch at the front door and chimneys at each end. Lawrence died at Mount Vernon, July 26, 1752, aged thirty-four. That what is now called the old tomb was constructed about this time is made clear by the first provision in his will—"that a proper vault for Interment be made on my home plantation wherein my remains together with my three children may be decently placed, and to serve for my wife and such other of the family as may desire it." The four children of Lawrence, all of whom died young, were doubtless born at Mount Vernon, and three of them are buried there.

The death of Lawrence changed the life of George, for Lawrence had been a second father to him, and had done much to give him that education which is derived from association with good men and good books. Lawrence kept him at Mount Vernon when it was possible, and in his latter days endeared himself to George by his resignation and by his patient endurance of suffering. "My loving brother George Washington" was left one of his executors, and at the death of Lawrence's daughter and only surviving child, Baby Sarah, which occurred in September at the age of one year, George inherited Mount Vernon, subject to a life interest in favor of the widow of Lawrence. George had to pay her fifteen thousand pounds of tobacco yearly. This was about all the estate at that time produced. The annuity might be paid in money at the rate of 12 shillings 6 pence per hundred weight, and would thus amount to £93 15s. The widow of Lawrence died in 1761.

In October, 1754, George Washington resigned his military command of the Virginia forces and retired to Mount Vernon, where he remained till he set out with General Braddock, who had arrived with a strong force from England. Two men-of-war, the *Nightingale*

and the Seahorse, escorted his sixteen transports. We do not know whether Washington mounted his horse and rode down the river to see the British ships come up, or whether he had the patience to wait till one after another they appeared round the point; but we may be sure that the officers gathered in little groups on the decks to gaze on the mansion of the Virginia colonel who the year before had fired that shot which Thackeray says wakened "a war which was to last for sixty years and which was to cover his own country and pass into Europe, to cost France her American colonies, to sever ours from us, and create the great Western Republic; to rage over the Old World when extinguished in the New; and, of all the myriads engaged in the vast contest, to leave the prize of the greatest fame with him who struck the first blow!" April 2, 1755, Washington wrote Captain Orme, one of Braddock's officers, at Alexandria: "The arrival of a good deal of company (among whom is my mother, alarmed at the report of my intentions to attend your fortunes) prevents me the pleasure of waiting upon you today." Washington first saw British regulars at Alexandria at this time, and, as he accompanied the expedition, made observations of them collectively and individually, which were of great value in our Revolution.

Braddock left Alexandria April 20th. Washington wrote his mother from Camp at Will's Creek, June 7th: "I hope you will spend the chief part of your time at Mount Vernon, as you have proposed to do; where, I am certain, everything will be ordered as much for your satisfaction as possible, in the situation we are in there." Braddock's defeat, July 9th, near Fort Duquesne, now Pittsburg, by the French and Indians, is one of the most disastrous in history. Washington returned to Mount Vernon, July 26th, where he remained in a

weak and feeble condition. August 14th he was commissioned commander-in-chief of the Virginia forces, and he was for four years busy on the frontier, returning to Mount Vernon from time to time. In 1756, Washington wrote from Winchester asking for leave of absence to attend a meeting of executors of the estate of Lawrence in September at Alexandria, "as I am very deeply interested, not only as executor and heir of part of his estate, but also in a very important dispute subsisting between Colonel Lee, who married the widow, and my brothers and self, concerning a devise in the will, which brings the whole personal estate in question." In September, 1757, Washington came to Mount Vernon to the funeral of William Fairfax, of Belvoir, the father of Anne. In November, Washington returned to Mount Vernon in bad health and was attended by his physician, Charles Green, who was also rector of Pohick Church. March 4, 1758, Washington writes from Mount Vernon that he has been under the care of several physicians, and intends to set out for Williamsburg to consult the best doctors there. He returned to his command about the first of April. When Washington's approaching marriage made it necessary to enlarge his mansion, John Patterson writes him June 17, 1758, that he will take the roof off the house as soon as the carpenters get the laths to shingle on. July 13th, Patterson writes: "The Great House was rais^d six days ago; sixteen thousand bricks have been burnt for the underpinning." July 14th, Colonel John Carlyle writes Washington that his house is now uncovered. August 13th, Patterson reports that the outside of the house is finished. Humphrey Knight writes Washington, August 24th, "The great house goes on as brisk as possible. The painter has been painting 3 days. Our carpenter is now getting laths to sheath ye great house." The repairs included new weather boards, closets, floors and a stairway to

the attic. It is not necessary to go into the extensive alterations and additions which were made at various times later, as they have been fully described by other writers.

In December, 1758, Washington resigned his commission, and he did not take up the sword again until, in June, 1775, he was chosen commander-in-chief of the American armies. In January, 1759, he was married to Mrs. Martha Custis and stayed at his bride's estate, White House, in New Kent on the Pamunky, until the close of the session of the House of Burgesses in May, when the couple came to live at Mount Vernon. Both the White House and Mrs. Washington's other residence, the Six Chimney House in Williamsburg, were finer mansions than Mount Vernon was at that time, but she cheerfully made her home in the remote and humble dwelling of Colonel Washington. You may see at Mount Vernon a pincushion made of her wedding gown—white brocaded satin, threaded with silver. Washington wrote, 20 September, 1759, from Mount Vernon: "I am now, I believe, fixed at this seat with an agreeable Consort for Life, and hope to find more happiness in retirement than I ever experienced amidst a wide and bustling world." This is the earliest expression of a thought which runs through his writings during the rest of his life, his enjoyment in the peaceful retirement of Mount Vernon; but, in view of his strenuous experiences when General and President, Washington must have smiled if he recalled how little he knew at twenty-seven about the "wide and bustling world."

For sixteen years before the Revolution Washington led the kind of life he always wished. His earliest daily record at Mount Vernon begins January 1, 1760, and states that on his return from visiting his plantations he found Mrs. Washington broke out with the measles. "January 2d Mrs. Barnes who came to visit Mrs. Wash-

ington yesterday returned home in my chariot, the weather being too bad to travel in an open carriage—which, together with Mrs. Washington's indisposition confined me to the House and gave me an opportunity of posting my books and putting them in good order. January 3d the weather continuing bad and ye same causes subsisting I confined myself to the house several of the Family were taken with the measles . . . Hauled the sein and got some fish, but was near being disappointed of my boat by means of an oyster man who had lain at my landing and plagued me a good deal by his disorderly behavior." I wish I could give the whole diary. Read it if you would have an idea of life at old Mount Vernon.

All his life Washington was an outdoor man. He was conceded to be the best horseman in Virginia. Before the Revolution he rode a hunting two or three times a week with neighbors and guests, and the mellow baying of the long-eared hounds, the distant horn and the view halloo, resounded from field and wood as the hunt swept on. When after foxes, sometimes the hounds would start a deer. Bears were seen near Mount Vernon as late as 1772. In November, 1785, Thomas Hunter saw thousands of ducks within gun shot and also wild geese and turkeys. The wild turkeys sometimes weighed thirty or forty pounds. Before the Revolution we find Washington ordering for himself "a pair of crimson velvet breeches, a pair of double campaigners (boots), a gentleman's hunting cap covered with black velvet to fit a pretty large head, cushioned round or stuffed to make it sit easy thereon, a silk band and handsome silver buckle to it, one best whole hunting whip, pretty stout and strong, caped with silver and my name engraved thereon. A riding frock of a handsome drab coloured broad cloth with plain double gilt buttons, a riding waistcoat of superior scarlet cloth and gold lace

with buttons like those of the coat. A large and loud hunting horn, laped and secured in the strongest manner." Washington went to many horse races, and tells us that on one occasion he went to a boat race on the Potomac. He records that he made a fishing trip on his schooner that lasted for several days. At night he slept on the boat or at the house of friends on the shore. Washington and his neighbors on the Potomac had barges manned by negroes in uniform. Among his orders from England were "a whale boat, long narrow sharp at both ends, and one dozen neat and light 18 feet oars for a light whale boat, the blades scooped and painted." Mr. Digges was a wealthy planter, whose estate, Warburton, could be seen across the Potomac in Maryland. At a signal his barge and that of Washington would meet in the middle of the river and transfer passengers. Washington had also a ferry boat in which carriages and horses were "put over" the Potomac. In 1785 Mrs. Macaulay Graham, an English authoress, came to America with her husband for the sole purpose of seeing Washington. Her history of England in eight volumes is forgotten, but the ten days they spent at Mount Vernon Washington has commemorated in his diary. He says: "At seven o'clock on the morning of June 14th I accompanied them to Mr. Digges's to which place I had her carriage and horses put over." When Captain John Smith came up the Potomac in 1608 it was so full of fish that he states that he killed them with his sword. In Washington's time hundreds of shad and thousands of herring were taken at Mount Vernon by means of seines drawn in by a windlass turned by horses.

Washington described Mount Vernon as follows: "No estate in the United States is more pleasantly situated. In a high and healthy country, in a latitude between the extremes of heat and cold, on one of the finest rivers in the world, a river well stocked with

various kinds of fish at all seasons of the year, and in the spring with shad, herring, bass, carp, sturgeon, etc., in great abundance. The borders of the estate are washed by more than ten miles of tidewater; several valuable fisheries appertain to it. The whole shore, in fact, is one vast fishery." The estate was divided into Mansion House Farm, River Farm, Union Farm, Muddy Hole Farm, Dogue Run Farm. The trolley line crosses the River Farm before reaching Hunting Creek. There are some thirty buildings at Mount Vernon, among which are the kitchen, connected with the mansion by an arcade, servants' quarters, butler's house, gardener's house, store house, smoke house, wash house, stable, coach house, barns, salt house, carpenter shop, spinning house, where sixteen wheels were kept going, green house, spring house, milk house, and an ice house which in mild winters was filled with snow. It was built when ice houses were curiosities, for nearly every one hung butter and milk down the well or kept them in a spring house.

In his will Washington describes himself as "George Washington of Mount Vernon, a citizen of the United States." I will not comment on this important statement further than to suggest that it offers food for thought by what it omits, no less than by what it includes. Washington was never really happy away from Mount Vernon. After the Revolution he wrote: "Agriculture has ever been the most favorite amusement of my life." In 1785 a visitor to Mount Vernon stated that Washington's greatest pride was to be thought the first farmer in America. That combination of accurate knowledge of human nature and untiring industry which made him a great commander made him also a great farmer. He was master of the art of turning his circumstances to the best account. At Mount Vernon there was no want, because there was no waste when the master was there. Though

he was a liberal contributor to churches, schools and private charities, Washington was economical both of time and money. He kept in books, in his own writing, lists of all articles ordered and copies of the receipts for them. He kept daybooks, ledgers and letter books and drew up contracts, leases and deeds with minute legal knowledge. Before the Revolution he employed no secretary, and the mass of his correspondence and other writing added considerably to his many tasks. He was always accurately informed with regard to the production of each field, the market value of his crops, the physical condition of workers and of live stock and the daily amount of work done by each. In farming and in landscape gardening the element of time is an important factor. Washington planned his work ahead for as much as three years. He was an expert judge of the quality of land. He rested old fields, sowed clover, timothy and other grasses for hay and for enriching the soil, and rotated his crops in the most scientific manner of his time. He made roads, cleared and fenced fields, stopped washouts and drained bogs and dug ditches. He wrote his overseer: "Whenever you have leisure to do it, it would be serviceable by way of stopping the progress of that gully at the mouth of the lane, at Mansion house—and indeed all others—to drive stakes across and retain the trash that is swept down with the torrent. They also serve to break the force of the water; and by degrees, with other assistance, fill them up. The gullies I mean, without these obstructions, the descending water from very heavy rains sweep all before it." "To introduce system, and a regular course of crops; to introduce grass where, and when proper; to make meadows and hedges, to recover my fields from the exhausted, and gullied state in which many of them are; to improve my stock, and to get into a way of establishing large dairies, and turning that stock to profitable uses and to make much hay which will always be in

demand, and command a good price; are much more desirable objects with me than to push the best of my fields, out of their regular course with a view to increase the next or any other year's crops of grain. I know full well that by picking and culling the fields I should be able for a year or two to make larger crops of grain; but I know also that by so doing I shall in a few years make nothing and find my land ruined." "Immediate profit is not so much an object with me as the restoration of worn out and gullied fields; bringing them in condition to bear grass, reclaiming and laying swamps to meadow, making live fences and ornamenting the grounds about the Mansion House." "I shall begrudge no reasonable expense that will contribute to the improvement and neatness of my farms; for nothing pleases me better than to see them in good order, and everything trim, handsome and thriving about them."

During the most trying times of the war he wrote Lund Washington, who was his overseer and whose home was at Hayfield four miles northwest of Mount Vernon, a long weekly letter. These letters have never been published, but the letters written to his overseers when he was President add greatly to our knowledge of the character of Washington and of his methods of doing business. "You must be governed by circumstances and your own view of the case; with this caution, not to undertake in this, or in anything else, more than you can accomplish well, recollecting always, that a thing but half done is never done; and well done, is, in a manner done for ever." "To correct the abuses which have crept into all parts of my business—to arrange it properly, and to reduce things to system; will require, I am sensible, a good deal of time and your utmost exertions; of the last from the character you bear, I entertain no doubt; the other, I am willing to allow, because I had rather you should probe things to the bot-

tom, whatever time it may require to do it, than to decide hastily upon the first view of them, as to establish good rules, and a regular system, is the life and the soul of every kind of business." Washington writes his overseer that nothing is more interesting to him than hedging. On the way back to Philadelphia from Mount Vernon in October, 1795, he says he observed all the hedges about Christiana, and from there to Wilmington. "I agree to your taking up the young Cedars along the Creek side, and transplanting them in the lane as you propose; and am glad to find you managed the Cedar berries in the manner you have mentioned; they certainly will make a good hedge; and are a tree of quick growth." "No hedge, alone, will, I am persuaded, do for an outer inclosure, where *two* or four footed hogs find it convenient to open a passage." "There is nothing which has relation to my farms, not even the crops of grain, that I am so solicitous about as getting my fields enclosed with live fences."

In 1789, Tobias Lear wrote that there were employed at Mount Vernon more than two hundred and fifty hands. The farms were not under the direction of overseers at that time, but were superintended by the General himself, who never failed visiting each of them every day unless the weather was absolutely stormy. Twenty-four plows were kept going at all times in the year when it was profitable for a plow to stir; "we have this spring already (March 30) put into the ground 600 bushels of oats, we have in wheat upwards of 700 acres, as much more prepared for corn, barley, potatoes, peas, beans, etc., near 500 acres in grass and shall sow this summer 150 acres of turnips. We have 140 horses, 112 cows, 235 working oxen, steers and heifers and 500 sheep—this is farming to some purpose—we carry on all the trades which are necessary for the support of those farms within ourselves—the seat and its offices resemble a little village, we have carpenters, joiners, bricklayers, blacksmiths, a

taylor and a shoemaker all of whom are as constantly employed in their several occupations as they are in the largest cities—but notwithstanding all this appearance of income, we are obliged to live at so great an expense that it brings in no profit—almost the whole of the produce is consumed within ourselves—the negroes are not treated as blacks in general, they are clothed and fed as well as any laboring people whatever and they are not subject to the lash of a domineering overseer.”

The trades carried on included carpentering, blacksmithing, wagon-making, coopering, shipbuilding, brick-making, masonry, tanning, shoemaking, harness-making, milling, distilling, tailoring, spinning, weaving and knitting. Washington had his own quarry and made lime by burning oyster shells brought in boats from Alexandria. Timber for joists, rafters and boards was hewn by hand, and the carpenters, when they had time in bad weather, made houses which were taken in parts to Alexandria and put up there. Washington records that two hundred days were spent in building a schooner, and smaller boats were also built. Before the Revolution tools, paints and many other requisites for the constant improvements and repairs were ordered from England. Charcoal was made for the blacksmith shop, and Peter, the colored blacksmith, helped in the construction of plows. Harrows, rakes, wheels for carts and spinning-wheels and other utensils were also made. Washington went to great pains to procure or to make from the best patterns, not infrequently in accordance with his own original ideas, the best machinery and tools. One of the first pumps in America was placed at Mount Vernon when the old oaken bucket, raised by a rope and windlass or by a long-balanced pole, was in general use elsewhere. In his diaries, Washington tells us of riding to his mill, helping in the construction of a plow, hauling the seine, posting his

books on rainy days and carefully preparing the orders from England. When he was at home he personally supervised all work and often assisted with his own hands. Washington rose early and did what would be a day's work for most people before breakfast. The full round of his plantations was about ten miles, and in summer he often rode it before breakfast, while in winter he would rise at four, light his fire and write by candlelight; only by this means was he able to keep his accounts posted and to attend to his letters. When the General arrived late for breakfast after a ride around his farms, Mrs. Washington would join him and cheer him at the table. He breakfasted at seven in summer and eight in winter on fish, bacon, ham, eggs, corncakes, butter, honey, coffee or tea. Dinner was at three, later there was tea, and at nine the General retired. A visitor states: "The dinner was very good, a small roasted pig, boiled leg of lamb, roasted fowles, beef, peas, lettuce, cucumbers, artichokes, puddings, tarts, etc." In 1768, Washington wrote in his diary: "Would any one believe that with a hundred and one cows, actually reported at a late enumeration of the cattle, I should still be obliged to buy butter for my family?" He devoted much attention to improving the breeds of sheep, hogs, cattle, dogs, horses and especially of mules. For breeding mules the King of Spain sent a jackass called Royal Gift, and Lafayette obtained another from Malta. Lafayette also sent hounds, Chinese pheasants and French partridges. June 25, 1786, Washington wrote: "Mr. Ogle of Maryland has been so obliging as to present to me six fawns from his park of English deer at Bellair. Of the forest deer of this country I have also procured six, two bucks and four does. With these, and tolerable care, I should soon have a full stock for my small paddock." In December, 1794, Washington wrote his overseer: "The gardener complains of the injury which

the shrubs (even in the yard) sustain from the deer. I am at a loss therefore in determining whether to give up the shrubs or the deer. Is there no way of frightening them from these haunts?"

In 1788, Gouverneur Morris offered a couple of Chinese pigs, "and in company with the pigs shall be sent a pair of Chinese geese, which are really the foolishest geese I ever beheld; for they choose all times for setting but in the spring, and one of them is now (November) actually engaged in that business." Washington accepted these "exotic animals" with thanks.

Washington made Mount Vernon the first station of experimental agriculture in America, for there, aided by information which he received from frequent correspondence with learned agriculturalists in Europe, he conducted numerous elaborate experiments on the nature of soils, fertilizers, seeds and the breeding of stock.

My friend, Mr. John C. Fitzpatrick, of the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress, calls my attention to the fact that, in the minuteness and completeness of his records of the weather at Mount Vernon, Washington anticipated by many years the United States Weather Bureau. He noted in his diaries the state of the moon, the clouds, the direction of the wind, and the amount of rain, snow, frost and drought. January 8, 1785, is the first record of the temperature, and probably before that date he did not have a thermometer. From then on he recorded the temperature morning, noon and night, and when he was away, Mrs. Washington entered it for him. The highest record is 88°, and when the mercury went below 10° it retired into the ball, after which the cold could only be guessed at. Washington's thermometer is one of the interesting Mount Vernon relics.

It is extraordinary how much Washington, who was the busiest man in America, did for his estate in

a lifetime, during large portions of which he was absent in the service of his country. With the art of a skillful landscape gardener, he improved the natural beauties of the place. He writes General Knox that, in the course of the conversation at Boston, he "was most interested by something which was said respecting the composition for a public walk," and it has been suggested that perhaps the Lovers' Walk of Boston Common was anticipated at Mount Vernon. On each side of the east lawn a grove of locusts extended to the river. Trees and shrubs were carefully trimmed to make a frame to the view of the Potomac, and care was taken to keep vistas open in every direction. The level lawn on the west front, with the wide serpentine walk shaded by weeping willows, the oval grass plot, the flower garden on one side and the kitchen garden on the other, are all laid out according to a plan drawn by Washington himself and still unchanged. He paid great attention to his lawns, and the first order sent to England after his marriage includes "a large assortment of grass seed." Carefully trimmed box borders outline the paths today exactly as in Washington's time, their dark green making the flower beds flame like stained-glass windows. Roses named by Washington for his mother and for Nelly Custis still bloom, together with yellow, damask, tea, and guilden roses. Old-fashioned flowers and plants are cherished—iris, sweet-williams, spice pinks, ivy, honeysuckle, lilacs and jasmine. Mrs. Washington's active interest in the garden is indicated by this extract from a letter of her husband: "I have too, Mrs. Washington's particular thanks to offer you for the flower roots and seeds."

No other living things bring us so close to Washington as some of the trees of Mount Vernon, for they were planted by him, and on them his eyes have rested with long and loving gaze. Like Cicero's diligent farmer, he

cared for them, knowing that he himself would never reap the benefit. To see his trees and plants rising from the earth and flourishing filled Washington's mind with thoughts which he said it was easier to imagine than to express. The degree of civilization of a nation, as well as of an individual, is shown by the care and culture of its trees, and those who have neglected and destroyed them have been punished by penalties which, though slow, have been sure. Washington studied as well as he could the economic value of forests and the ornamental properties of trees, but the technical aspects of forestry, such as reforestation, the relation of forests to moisture and rain fall, water supply, climate and public health were not so well understood in his time as they are now. The following books on trees were in Washington's library: "The Orchardist: or a System of close Pruning and Medication," by Thomas Bucknall; a pamphlet by John Robinson, Surveyor-General of Woods and Forests, London, 1794, "On the state of waste lands and common fields of Great Britain"; "The American Grove," Humphry Marshall, Philadelphia, 1785; an alphabetical catalogue of trees and shrubs of the United States, with description of their appearance, manner of growth and hints of their uses in medicine, dyes and domestic economy. Professor Sargent informs me that this is the first book on botany written by an American. In 1917, Professor Sargent thought that there were fifty-seven trees which had been planted by Washington. In his book, the study of which adds interest to the visit to Mount Vernon, Professor Sargent says: "Three yellow poplars were undoubtedly planted under Washington's personal direction."• Seven buckeye-trees grown from seeds, gathered by him in what is now West Virginia, have red, pink, and flesh-colored flowers on different individuals. Trees with flowers of these colors exist at Mount Vernon alone. The mag-

nolia planted by Washington is the most famous tree at Mount Vernon. Three hemlocks planted by him still remain. Three box trees probably planted by him are among the handsomest and most interesting trees.

Washington wished to have perfect specimens of every tree that would grow at Mount Vernon. He personally superintended the selection of the most beautiful from the neighboring woods, and watched them with care until it was clear that the transplanting was successful. He arranged them symmetrically, and mingled forest trees, flowering shrubs and evergreens so as to produce the most agreeable effect. Washington writes, January 27, 1785: "Went to Belvoir and viewed the ruined buildings of that place. In doing this I passed along the side of Dogue Creek and the river to the White House in search of elm and other trees for my shrubberies and found none of the former but discovered one fringe tree and a few crab trees in the first field beyond my line—and in returning home, which I did to dinner, I found several young holly trees." The next day he says: "Rode today to my plantations in the Neck—partly with a view to search for trees for which purpose I passed through the woods and in the first drain beyond the bars in my lower pasture, I discovered in tracing it upwards, many small and thriving plants of the magnolia and about and within the fence not far distant, some young maple trees and the red berry of the swamp. I also along the Branch within Col. Mason's field came across a mere nursery of young crab trees of all sizes and handsome and thriving, and along the same branch on the outer side of the fence I discovered several young holly trees. But whether from the real scarcity or difficulty of distinguishing I could find none of the fringe tree." Exotic plants were cultivated with care by Washington. Amariah Frost wrote, 1797: "We viewed the gardens and walks, which are very elegant, abound-

ing with many curiosities, fig-trees, raisins, limes, oranges, large English mulberries, artichokes, etc."

In what he called his Botanical Garden between the flower-garden and the spinner's house, Washington carried on much of his investigation. The nurseries, gardens and greenhouse were filled with choice collections of rare plants, fruit trees, vegetables and flowers. To do this was not easy at a time when means of communication and transportation were almost primitive, but admirers in all parts of the world knew that the best way to please the most distinguished man in the world was to send him a choice plant or animal for his estate. Washington's favorite Bible quotation about the shade of his own vine and fig-tree was not entirely a figure of speech, for fig-trees were trained on the warm side of the north garden wall, and he paid much attention to the cultivation of grapes. They are frequently mentioned. We read, for instance, that the French minister, Luzerne, sent vines, different kinds "of the most valuable eating grapes in France." It is not in accordance with his character that the story by which Washington is most widely known represents him as wantonly destroying a cherry-tree. In later years he wrote: "It is always in one's power to cut a tree down, but time only can place them where one would have them." All Washington's life he was acting in accordance with the sentiment which later was expressed by Sir Walter Scott, who did for Abbotsford what Washington did for Mount Vernon—"When ye hae naithing else to do, ye may be aye sticking in a tree; it will be growing, when ye're sleeping." The passages in Washington's letters and diaries, in which he speaks of his trees, would make a book of considerable size. For years his diaries show that in February and March he was employed in setting out and grafting fruit trees; for instance, March 21, 1763, "Grafted 40 cherrys, viz., 12 Bullock Hearts

(a large black May Cherry), 18 very fine May Cherry, 10 Coronation. Also grafted 12 Magnum Bonum Plums. Also planted 4 Nuts of the Mediterranean Pine. Note: the cherries and plums came from Col. Mason's, the nuts from Mr. Green's." He mentions grafting or planting Spanish Pears, Butter Pears, Black Pear of Worcester, Bergamy Pears, New Town Pippins from Col. Mason, who had them from Mr. President Blair, and grapes from Mr. Digges. Washington set out lilac, sassafras, dogwood, aspen, mulberry, maple, black gum, poplar, locust, yellow willow, pines, juniper, evergreens, spruce, peach-trees, hemlocks, weeping willow and magnolia. He was extremely fond of nuts and planted many nut trees. Three pecans planted by him before the Revolution were given him by Jefferson and have not yet attained middle age. The diary states September 15, 1763: "Planted in 11 holes on the west side of the Garden 22 English walnuts," and he also speaks of planting shellbarks, filberts and twenty-five Mississippi nuts, somewhat like the pignut, but larger, thinner shelled and fuller of meat. Washington wrote from Philadelphia to his overseer, 22d Feb., 1794: "I have shipped three bushels of Clover seed; two bushels of honey locust seed; and a keg of scaley bark hickory nuts;—the two last are in one Cask: . . . Tell the Gardener he must plant the hickory nuts in drills;—as the Illinois nuts herewith sent, must also be:—and they may be put near together in the drills, as they will be transplanted when they get to a proper size." The Illinois nuts were pecans. The diary shows that all the spring of 1785 Washington was busy grafting and planting trees. January 19th, "Employed till dinner in laying out my Serpentine Road and Shrubberies adjoining. February 22nd—Removed two pretty large and full grown lilacs to the No. Garden gate—one on each side taking up as much dirt with the roots as could be well

obtained—I also removed from the woods and old fields, several young trees of the Sassafras, Dogwood and Red-bud, to the Shrubbery on the No. side the grass plot. February 28th—Planted all the Mulberry trees, Maple trees and Black gums in my Serpentine walks—and the Poplars on the right walk.” March 23, 1786, he says he planted between 17,000 and 18,000 seeds of the honey locust. In 1794, 5000 plants of the white thorn were sent to him by Mr. Lear from London. Washington was indebted to trees for his mansion. The framework is of oak, the sheathing North Carolina pine and the shingles cypress. The last time he left the house, which was the afternoon of the day before he died, he walked out through the snow to mark some trees to be cut down between the mansion and the river. His last letter was to his manager about the care of Mount Vernon. At his death he left written plans for the rotation of crops up to the end of 1803.

In a letter to his neighbor, George Mason, written in 1769, Washington speaks of those “who live genteely and hospitably on clear estates,” and this is an exact description in eight words of the life at Mount Vernon. Though Washington said “we live in a state of peaceful tranquillity,” Mount Vernon was by no means quiet. The original brass knocker hangs on the central door, but I doubt if it was ever used, for long before reaching the door the arrival of company was announced by the barking of the dogs. Martha Washington writes that when she had gone on a visit and left her small son at home, every time the dogs barked she thought it was a messenger for her. If a day passed without company at Mount Vernon, Washington mentioned it in his diary. It has been figured out that in two months in 1768, Washington had company to dinner or to spend the night on twenty-nine days, and dined away or visited on seven. People whose very names their host

did not know were entertained there. Mount Vernon stands back a mile from the road to Colchester. Though the house can be seen from a considerable distance, people did not arrive there by accident. In 1787 Washington wrote: "My house may be compared to a well resorted tavern, as scarcely any strangers who are going from north to south, or from south to north, do not spend a day or two at it." "Those who resort here are strangers and people of the first distinction." Washington had so many letters to write and so much company that he was deprived of exercise. Persons who had been connected with the army wished certificates in order to prove claims against the government; these made it necessary to spend much time consulting his records. For more than two years after the war he had no secretary. If David Humphries, Yale, 1771, who was later one of his secretaries and who did much literary work at Mount Vernon, had only given us an exact account of the daily life there, he would have earned lasting gratitude. Instead of which he produced a poem in the stilted manner of the period, beginning:

"By broad Potowmack's azure tide,
Where Vernon's Mount, in sylvan pride
Displays its beauties far,
Great Washington, to peaceful shades,
Where no unhallow'd wish invades,
Retir'd from fields of war."

Though he lived simply and kept early hours, George Washington always paid great attention to the manner of doing things, and the grand air which he learned in his youth from Lord Fairfax he always retained. Distinguished guests were lighted to their rooms by the General himself. The broad piazza overlooking the river was the usual meeting place when the weather permitted. The amount of entertaining which the Washingtons expected to do may be inferred from the

fact that six carving knives and forks are in the first order from England after their marriage. They were both of them particular about their clothes, china, furniture and equipages. When at Mount Vernon Mrs. Washington dressed plainly. When she drove to Alexandria or Annapolis or Williamsburg with her coach and four, with the negro postillions and coachman in white and scarlet, she dressed as was fitting. In December, 1755, Washington ordered from London two complete livery suits for servants. "I would have you choose the livery by our arms, only as the Field of the Arms is white; I think the cloaths had better not be quite so, but nearly like the Inclosed. The Trimmings and Facings of Scarlet and a scarlet waistcoat. If Livery Lace is not quite disusd I should be glad to have these cloaths Lacd, as I like that taste best, also two Silver Lacd Hatts to the above Livery's." August 10, 1764, he ordered "A Livery suit to be made of worsted shagg of the Inclosed colour and fineness lined with red shalloon and made as follows: The coat and Breeches alike with a plain white washed button—the button holes worked with mohair of the same colour. A collar of red shagg to the coat with a narrow lace like Inclosed round it—a narrow cuff of the same colour of the coat turned up to the bent of the arm and lacd round at that part—the waistcoat made of red shagg (worsted shagg also) and lacd with the same lace as that upon the collar and sleeves." No doubt it was that the white flowers of the dogwood and the red of the redwood might reproduce his colors that, March 1, 1795, Washington planted "A circle of Dogwood with a Red bud in the middle close to the old cherry tree near the south garden house."

Washington paid his debts promptly, and no man was more liberal to the poor or more ready to give his time and money to the public service. When he

took command of the Army, in 1775, he wrote Lund Washington, who had charge of his affairs at Mount Vernon: "Let the hospitality of the house, with respect to the poor, be kept up. Let no one go hungry away. If any of this kind of people should be in want of corn, supply their necessities, provided it does not encourage them in idleness; and I have no objection to your giving my money in charity, to the amount of forty or fifty pounds a year, when you think it well bestowed. What I mean by having no objection is, that it is my desire that it should be done." "I wish that my horses and stock of every kind should be fed with judicious plenty and economy, but without the least profusion or waste."

One of the overseers wrote: "I had orders from General Washington to fill a cornhouse every year, for the sole use of the poor in my neighborhood, to whom it was a most seasonable and precious relief, saving numbers of poor women and children from extreme want, and blessing them with plenty . . . He owned several fishing stations on the Potomac, at which excellent herring were caught, and which, when salted, proved an important article of food to the poor. For their accommodation he appropriated a station—one of the best he had—and furnished it with all the necessary apparatus for taking herring. Here the honest poor might fish free of expense, at any time, by only an application to the overseer; and if at any time unequal to the labor of hauling the seine, assistance was rendered by order of the General." In 1794, Washington gave his overseer definite instructions with regard to the entertainment of visitors at Mount Vernon. There were, he said, three classes of persons to whom should be given: "First, my *particular* and intimate acquaintance, in case business should call them there, such for instance as Doctor Craik,—2ndly some of the *most* respectable foreigners who may, perchance, be in Alexandria or

the federal city; and be either brought down, or introduced by letter from some of my particular acquaintance as before mentioned; or thirdly, to persons of some distinction (such as members of Congress & etc) who may be travelling through the Country from North to South, or from south to North . . . I have no objection to any sober or orderly person's gratifying their curiosity in viewing the buildings, Gardens &ct about Mount Vernon; but it is only to such persons as I have described, that I ought to be run to any expense on account of these visits of curiosity, beyond common civility and hospitality,—No gentleman who has a proper respect for his own character (except relations and intimates) would use the house in my absence for the sake of conveniency (as it is far removed from the public roads) unless invited to do so by me or some friend;—nor do I suppose any of this description would go there without a personal or written introduction.”

Washington's ability to express a proposition clearly and to refuse a request gracefully is exemplified in the following letter—which he wrote October 30, 1787:

“My fixed determination is, that no person whatever shall hunt upon my grounds or waters—To grant leave to one, and refuse another, would not only be drawing a line of discrimination which would be offensive, but would subject one to great inconvenience—for my strict and positive orders to all my people are if they hear a gun fired upon my land to go immediately in pursuit of it. Permission therefore to anyone would keep them either always in pursuit—or make them inattentive to my orders under the supposition of its belonging to a licensed person by which means I should be obtruded upon by others who to my cost I find had other objects in view. Besides, as I have not lost my relish for this sport when I can find time to indulge myself in it, and Gentlemen who come to the House are pleased with it,

it is my wish not to have the game within my jurisdiction disturbed. For these reasons I beg you will not take my refusal amiss, because I would give the same to my brother if he lived off my land."

It is entirely owing to the efforts of the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association that when you cross the threshold of the mansion, you step into the home life of the Washingtons. George and Martha made their house a beautiful home, filled with handsome furniture of a period when furniture was noted for its substantial elegance. They were both of them particular about the appointments of the table, and Washington goes with minute care into details of wine-glasses, finger-bowls, decanters, butter-boats, tureens and other dishes. It is possible here to mention but a few of the priceless relics of Washington with which the Ladies of Mount Vernon have filled the mansion. I am especially interested in the tools with which Washington worked. His surveyor's tripod is in the library. At sixteen he was earning his living by surveying, and he worked at it in later years, sometimes making surveys of Hunting Creek and other streams on the ice. As late as April 21, 1785, he records that he went to Abingdon in his barge, "Took my instruments with intent to survey the land I hold by purchase on four mile run three miles above Alexandria," but the surveying ended abruptly, because Billy Lee, who was carrying the chain, fell and broke his knee pan, so that he had to be carried to Abingdon on a sled, as he could neither walk, stand, nor ride. A book might be written about the inkstand from which Washington dipped so many historic lines. In the hall are the swords with which he directed his troops. In leaving them to his nephews he tells them not to unsheath them for the purpose of shedding blood, except for self-defense or in defense of their country and its rights, and in the latter case to keep them unsheathed,

and to prefer falling with them in their hands to the relinquishment thereof. Washington's spy-glasses are poor things compared with modern binoculars, but he was the best observer in either army, and always wished to do his reconnoitering with his own eyes. He strained his eyes, so that he had to use spectacles, and remarked that he had not only grown old but blind in the service. You will see the implements with which he worked, but you will look in vain for pictures of Washington crossing the Delaware, or of Cornwallis surrendering at Yorktown; for, as the poet Prior said of William of Orange, the monuments of Washington's actions are to be seen everywhere except in his own house. I do not understand the flute in the music room, for Washington wrote Francis Hopkinson that he could neither sing one of his songs nor raise a single note on any instrument. In his earliest account-book there is an entry when Washington was sixteen "to cash pd ye Musick Master for my Entrance 3/9." An artist has painted the old Washington at Mount Vernon playing the flute, and another well-known painting represents the Washingtons entertaining Lafayette on the piazza, the party being seated in the best parlor chairs. Mrs. Washington was too careful a housekeeper to take her parlor chairs out even for Lafayette, and thirty windsor chairs were provided for the porch. The large number of chairs indicates that the Washingtons had to be prepared to receive many friends. A better subject for a painter, and one which has never been used, is furnished by Elkanah Watson, who, in January, 1785, spent at Mount Vernon what he calls "two of the richest days of my life." He says: "I found him (Washington) kind and benignant in the domestic circle, revered and beloved by all around him; agreeably social, without ostentation; delighting in anecdote and adventures, without assumption; his domestic arrangements harmonious

and systematic. His servants seemed to watch his eye, and to anticipate his every wish; hence a look was equivalent to a command. His servant, Billy, the faithful companion of his military career, was always at his side, smiling content, animated and beamed on every countenance in his presence." Watson had a severe cough, and he says, some time after he had retired, "the door of my room was gently opened and on drawing my bed-curtains, to my utter astonishment, I beheld Washington himself, standing at my bed-side with a bowl of hot tea in his hand." What a picture: the General with his old military cloak thrown over his broad shoulders, a candle in one hand and the bowl of tea in the other, and the astonished face of Watson peering out between the bed curtains! I wonder how Washington got that tea in those days when water froze in the kettle at night and they had to light the fire with a flint. Watson says that Washington talked about little else for two days but the navigation of the Potomac.

In the hall hangs the original deed of 1674 by which John Washington, the emigrant, great grandfather of George, derived from Lord Culpepper his title to Mount Vernon. If you are fond of puzzles try to read it. The Houdon bust, which Stuart called the only representation of Washington better than his own portraits, was made at Mount Vernon. It is by no means the least of the debts America owes to France. Houdon, the most celebrated sculptor of that time, came from France at the request of the General Assembly of Virginia in order to model Washington from life. With his three assistants he arrived from Alexandria by water at eleven o'clock at night. He remained about three weeks, and made a cast of the face, head and shoulders and took minute measurements of the body. Amid so much that is vague and legendary, the Houdon statue stands forth

clear in its artistic and historic accuracy. No work of art exists that is more authentic. "From its inception to its completion it is historically marked by a chronological record of facts, resolutions, correspondence and inscriptions which will preserve its identity and character through all time; and what is most rare, its perfect similitude to the original is established by facts and opinions as convincing as human testimony can furnish." Lafayette said that it is a "fac-simile of Washington's Person."

Other representations of Washington had been executed at Mount Vernon before the arrival of Houdon. In May, 1772, Charles Willson Peale painted Washington in the blue and red uniform of a colonel of Virginia militia, and he made also miniatures of Mrs. Washington and her two children. Peale returned in January, 1774, and painted the portrait of John Parke Custis. Peale says in his diary that, as he was leaving, Colonel Washington gave him a cup and saucer to take to his wife as a souvenir. April 28, 1784, Robert Edge Pine came and remained three weeks, painting Washington and the two grandchildren, George Washington Custis and Nelly Custis.

The Key of the Bastille, sent to Washington by Lafayette, gives an international emphasis to Washington's efforts for freedom. The fourteenth of July, 1789, the day of the destruction of that fortress, where for four hundred years Frenchmen had been imprisoned without a trial, is to the French what the Fourth of July is to us.

At Mount Vernon the cultivation of no part of Washington's nature was neglected. He found abundant exercise for his body in hard work on his farms, in the long rides which it was necessary for him to take, in hunting with his horses and hounds, and he was a stately and graceful dancer. Books, letters, pondering on im-

portant matters and converse with intellectual neighbors like George Mason and Lord Fairfax, exercised his mind. He found uplift for his soul in reading his Bible, in communion with his good wife, who was a woman of eminent piety, and in the church services at Pohick and Alexandria. On Sundays, when the Washingtons were stormbound, he read the Bible and sermons to his family with distinct and precise enunciation. There is a book entirely in his writing of prayers for the mornings and evenings of different days of the week, which he carefully compiled from sentences in the Book of Common Prayer, and there is a pocket note-book in which Washington has entered Bible references. With the exception of an interlined note, all the entries in the family Bible are in his writing. In 1794 he wrote Charles Thompson that he had finished reading the first part of his translation of the Septuagint. Washington often quotes the Scriptures, his favorite reference being to the verse in Micah about reposing under his own vine and fig-tree. He expresses a wish that the swords might be turned to plough shares, the spears into pruning-hooks, and as the Scripture expresses it, "the nations learn war no more." He regrets that Noah allowed the tobacco worms to get into the ark, and in my "Washington as Man of Letters" I have given other quotations showing that Washington was very familiar with the Bible. His nephew, Robert Lewis, said that he had accidentally witnessed Washington's private devotions in his library both morning and evening, and had seen him kneeling with an open Bible before him, and that this was his daily habit. Washington went to his library at four in the morning, and, after his devotions, spent the time till breakfast in writing and study. He also spent an hour in his library before retiring at night, and he wrote: "It is my intention to retire (and unless prevented by very particular company, I always do retire) either to bed or to my study

soon after candlelight." The library was rich in books of devotion, and Mrs. Washington is known to have been a great reader of them. That the General read them also is shown by his letters. In 1789, acknowledging a sermon on the text "But ye shall die like men," Washington not only says that he has read the sermon, but also that he approves the doctrine inculcated. August 14, 1797, Washington wrote the Reverend Zachariah Lewis, thanking him for the sermons he had sent, and saying that the doctrine in them is sound and does credit to the author. Nelly Custis wrote Jared Sparks with regard to Washington: "He attended the church at Alexandria when the weather and roads permitted, a ride of ten miles. In New York and Philadelphia he never omitted attendance at church in the morning, unless detained by indisposition. The afternoon was spent in his own room at home; the evening with his family, and without company. Sometimes an old and intimate friend called to see us for an hour or two; but visiting and visitors were prohibited for that day. No one in church attended to the services with more reverential respect. My grandmother, who was eminently pious, never deviated from her early habits. She always knelt. The General, as was then the custom, stood during the devotional parts of the service." Bishop White states that Washington's manner at church was always serious and attentive. A foreign house guest at Mount Vernon observed that on Sabbath evening there was no secular music and not even a game of chess. Throughout his campaigns Washington was always careful about religious services. William Fairfax wrote him in 1754 that he had no doubt that his having public prayers in camp would have great influence with the Indians. Washington read the funeral service over General Braddock, and as a young officer frequently read prayers and the Scriptures to his men. During the

French and Indian War Colonel Temple "more than once found him on his knees at his devotions." In his diary Washington records: "Williamsburg June 1, 1774, went to church and fasted all day." Unless a clergyman was present Washington always asked a blessing at his table. We have seen how particular Augustine Washington was in his attendance on vestry meetings. The Pohick vestry book shows that his son was equally scrupulous. From 1763 to 1774 George Washington attended twenty-three of the thirty-one meetings of Pohick vestry, once he was sick in bed, twice he was in attendance on the House of Burgesses, and three times he is known to have been out of the county, and the other two times he was probably out of county. Rev. Charles Green, who was rector of Pohick, 1738-65, was also the family physician and a valued friend. His successor, Rev. Lee Massey, wrote: "I never knew so constant an attendant in church as Washington, and his behavior in the house of God was ever so deeply reverential that it produced the happiest effect on my congregation and greatly assisted me in my pulpit labors. No company ever withheld him from church. I have often been at Mount Vernon on Sabbath morning, when his breakfast table was filled with guests; but to him they furnished no pretext for neglecting his God and losing the satisfaction of setting a good example. For, instead of staying at home out of false complaisance to them, he used constantly to invite them to accompany him." It has been objected that Washington's diary shows that in 1760 he went to Pohick church but sixteen times, but services were not held at Pohick every Sunday. Doubtless there were Sundays when bad roads and inclement weather made it impossible to get there, and there were other Sundays when Washington was away from home. It is even possible that he may have been to church and omitted to enter the fact in his diary.

There are numerous records of Washington's attending church when away from home. Jared Sparks, who studied Washington's manuscripts as no other person has been able to do, states: "After a long and minute examination of the writings of Washington, public and private, in print and in manuscript, I can affirm that I have never seen a single hint or expression from which it could be inferred that he had any doubt of the Christian revelation, or that he thought with indifference or unconcern of that subject. On the contrary, whenever he approaches it, and indeed whenever he alludes in any manner to religion, it is done with seriousness and reverence." "If a man, who spoke, wrote, and acted as a Christian through a long life, who gave numerous proofs of his believing himself to be such, and who was never known to say, write or do a thing contrary to his professions, if such a man is not to be ranked among the believers of Christianity, it would be impossible to establish the point by any train of reasoning."

When in 1773 Mrs. Washington's only daughter, beautiful Patsy Custis, was fatally stricken, Washington knelt by her side and prayed fervently for her recovery. His diary states, June 19th: "At home all day—about five o'clock poor Patsy Custis died suddenly." The next day Washington wrote: "She expired in less than two minutes without uttering a word or groan or scarce a sigh, the sweet innocent girl entered into a more happy and peaceful abode than she has met with in the afflicted path she has hitherto trod. It is an easier matter to conceive than to describe the distress of this family at the loss of dear Patsy Custis. This sudden and unexpected blow, I need scarce add has almost reduced my poor wife to the lowest ebb of misery; which is increased by the absence of her son who is a student in King's College, New York." Patsy was laid to rest in the old tomb on the twentieth. The diary states the nineteenth

was very warm and clear, with a south wind. The day of the funeral it was still very warm, with thunder and appearances of rain, but none fell at Mount Vernon. The custom of placing the tomb near the mansion caused the departed to continue in a peculiar and intimate manner members of the household, and the proximity of the mortal remains of loved ones like Patsy Custis and Lawrence Washington kept the eternal verities constantly before the thoughtful mind.

Washington could not have been the man he was without the inspiration of his deeply pious nature. No one was more fully convinced than he that without righteousness no nation can be exalted, and this fundamental truth pervades his voluminous writings. There is no sentiment more sincere or more frequent than his confidence in God and gratitude for His mercies. In 1755, after his campaign with Braddock, Washington writes: "By all the powerful dispensations of Providence, I have been protected beyond all human probability or expectation; for I had four bullets through my coat and two horses shot under me, yet escaped unhurt although death was levelling my companions on every side of me." In 1789 he wrote: "When I contemplate the interposition of Providence, as it was manifested in guiding us through the Revolution, in preparing us for the reception of a General Government, and in conciliating the good will of the people of America towards one another, after its adoption, I feel myself oppressed and almost overwhelmed, with a sense of the Divine Munificence." "I am sure there never was a people, who had more reason to acknowledge a divine interposition in their affairs, than those of the United States; and I should be pained to believe that they have forgotten that agency, which was so often manifested during our Revolution or that they failed to consider the omnipotence of that God, who is alone able to protect them."

Little has been written about the conferences which some of the most important men of those critical times held at Mount Vernon. George Mason, who drafted the first Constitution of Virginia, lived at Gunston Hall, a few miles down the river. Among Washington's papers are the Fairfax Resolves, in the writing of Mason, adopted by a committee of which Washington was chairman, July 18, 1774. There were twenty-four of these resolutions, forming one of the most important documents in our early history. They may be summed up in the statement—we will religiously maintain and inviolably adhere to such measures as shall be concerted by the general Congress for the preservation of our lives, liberties and fortunes. Jefferson drafted the Declaration of Independence, but the essential ideas of that great document may be found in the Fairfax resolves, with which Jefferson as a Virginia statesman was perfectly familiar. There can be little doubt that Washington and Mason did a large part of the work on these resolutions at Mount Vernon. Two weeks later these resolves were in effect adopted by the Virginia Convention, where Washington represented Fairfax County, and they formed the basis of Virginia's instructions to her delegates to the first Continental Congress. Before that Congress Washington enters in his diary: "August 30—Colo. Pendleton, Mr. Henry, Colo. Mason, and Mr. Thos. Triplet, came in the evening and stayed all night. 31. All the above gentlemen dined here; after which with Colo. Pendleton and Mr. Henry, I set out on my journey to Philadelphia." Horatio Gates, Henry Lee and others had an important conference at Mount Vernon, May 3, 1775, and the next day Washington set out for the Second Congress at Philadelphia. Historians have paid little attention to the Mount Vernon Convention held in March, 1785. At this time our country was in greater peril than during the war, because the pressure from

without, which held the states together, being removed, they were in danger of falling apart, so that Washington wrote: "what astonishing changes a few years are capable of producing. I am told that even respectable characters speak of a monarchical form of government without horror. From thinking proceeds speaking; thence to acting is often but a step. But how irrevocable and tremendous." Commissioners had been appointed by Maryland and Virginia to settle the navigation and jurisdiction of the Chesapeake and Potomac. Among the delegates were Daniel of St. Thomas Jenifer, Samuel Chase and George Mason. The commission recommended a uniformity of duties, currency and commercial regulations, and, in consequence of this, Virginia sent out an invitation to all the states which resulted in the convention which framed our Constitution. A pleasant instance of neighborly courtesy is described when Washington recorded in his diary that he sent Mr. Mason home from the convention in his carriage, "by the return of which he sent me some young shoots of the Persian jessamine and Guelder rose."

Washington took great pains to secure the most exact information on subjects which interested him. All his life he was buying books. His library of more than a thousand volumes, mostly on agriculture, government and military affairs was a large one for that time. An interesting date is Friday, June 16, 1786, when Washington records: "Began about 10 o'clock to put up the book press in my study." Washington had at Mount Vernon more than two hundred folio volumes of his documents, and these formed only a part of his manuscripts. His diary speaks of entire days spent in writing. In 1797, he states that he intends to erect a building at Mount Vernon for the security of his papers. How restful it was for him to turn aside from weighty and perplexing matters of state and the selfish designs of politicians, and

to write: "I have a high opinion of beans." "Of all the improving and ameliorating crops, none in my opinion is equal to potatoes." It was in his library that Washington made those painstaking studies of republican forms of government, the notes of which still exist in his writing. He made good use of them when he presided at the Constitutional Convention, which convened in 1787. We form a better idea of his sacrifices for our country as we picture him before the convention, going around Mount Vernon for ten days with his arm in a sling because of rheumatism. Few Americans understand that if we had had no Washington we should not have had our Constitution; not only because of his powerful agency in framing it and his great influence in securing its adoption, but because the certainty that Washington would be first President made the people sure that the provisions of the Constitution would be interpreted with wisdom and executed with justice. Not until Washington was elected was the chief power in America vested in a single person, and in Washington the highest power was entrusted to the most worthy, which is the greatest assurance of good government. Respect for Washington among the nations of Europe gave dignity to our new government.

In 1791 Major L'Enfant, who had served as engineer in the American army, spent some time with Washington at Mount Vernon, and in consultation with the President drew up the plans of the Federal City, which was afterwards called Washington. In September, 1798, Washington laid the corner stone of the capitol. There is no doubt that nothing but the extreme conscientiousness of Washington, and his reluctance to use his influence for his own advantage, is responsible for locating the Federal City so far away from Mount Vernon.

It was from Mount Vernon, May 20, 1792, that Washington wrote Madison concerning matters which

he says he had been revolving in his mind with thoughtful anxiety. He asked Madison to turn his thoughts to a valedictory address, and to say, among other things: "That we are *all* the children of the same country, a country great and rich in itself—capable and promising to be as prosperous and as happy as any the annals of history have ever brought to our view—that our interest, however diversified in local and smaller matters, is the same in all the great and essential concerns of the nation. That the extent of our country—the diversity of our climate and soil—and the various productions of the States consequent of both, are such as to make one part not only convenient, but perhaps indispensably necessary to the other part; and may render the whole (at no distant period) one of the most independent in the world. That the established government being the work of our own hands, with the seeds of amendment engrafted in the Constitution may by wisdom, good dispositions, and mutual allowances; aided by experience, bring it as near to perfection as any human institution ever approximated; and therefore, the only strife among us ought to be, who should be foremost in facilitating and finally accomplishing such great and desirable objects; by giving every possible support and cement to the Union." Here we have the idea of the Farewell Address carefully thought out by Washington at Mount Vernon more than four years before the address was published. Washington was at Mount Vernon from June 20 to August 17, 1796, and made the final draft of his Farewell Address, which was made public in September. Lossing wrote: "Of all the associations which cluster around Mount Vernon, none should be dearer to the heart of freedom and good order than that connected with Washington's Farewell Address." And Daniel Webster said: "Whenever his Farewell Address to his country shall be forgotten, and its admonitions rejected by the people of America,

from that time it will become a farewell address to all the bright hopes of human liberty on earth."

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While the sweet influences of Mount Vernon are sinking into our souls, let us not forget the gracious lady who inspired and comforted her husband throughout so many anxious years. Martha Washington preferred to remain in the background, so that her services to our country have never been understood and appreciated. She always encouraged the General to patriotic effort at the sacrifice of that domestic life to which both were devoted. At the very beginning of the Revolution she wrote: "My mind is made up; my heart is in the cause." For that cause, which was our cause, the Washingtons placed at stake their lives and all their earthly possessions. Late in August, 1774, Patrick Henry and Edmund Pendleton spent the night at Mount Vernon, before setting out with Washington for Philadelphia to attend the first Continental Congress. Mr. Pendleton has left a charming description of their hostess at this critical period: "I was much pleased with Mrs. Washington and her spirit. She seemed ready to make any sacrifice, and was cheerful, though I know she felt anxious. She talked like a Spartan mother to her son on going to battle. 'I hope you will all stand firm. I know George will,' she said. The dear little woman was busy from morning until night with domestic duties, but she gave us much time in conversation and affording us entertainment. When we set off in the morning, she stood in the door and cheered us with the good words, 'God be with you, gentlemen.' Martha Washington little thought, when she said good-bye to her husband in May, 1775, that it would be more than six years before he returned to Mount Vernon, and that when she saw him next he would be five hundred miles away from home, at the head of the American army. Till she went to Cambridge she had never been farther

north than Alexandria. She travelled in state in the family coach, attended by liveried servants and accompanied by her son and his wife. She filled her difficult position at Headquarters in the Longfellow house with tact and courtesy, for she was equal to every situation in which her husband's exalted station placed her. The uniform testimony of those who knew Martha Washington is that she combined, in an extraordinary degree, dignity and affability. You will realize her delicacy of feeling and elevation of character when you read this exquisite letter which Martha Washington wrote in 1773 to the girl bride of her only son:

My dear Nelly: God took from Me a Daughter when June Roses were blooming. He has now given me another daughter about her Age when Winter winds are blowing, to warm my Heart again. I am as Happy as One so Afflicted and so Blest can be. Pray receive my Benediction and a wish that you may long live the Loving Wife of my Happy Son, and a Loving Daughter of
Your Affectionate Mother,

M. WASHINGTON.

It is to be regretted that no letter from Mrs. Washington to her husband has been preserved, and that there are only three letters that he wrote her. Here is one that is little known. It was written as the newly appointed general was setting out to take command of the American army, and was found in Mrs. Washington's writing desk after her death.

PHILADELPHIA, *June 23d.*

My Dearest: As I am within a few minutes of leaving this city, I could not think of departing from it without dropping you a line; especially as I do not know whether it may be in my power to write again till I get to the camp at Boston. I go fully trusting in that Prov-

idence, which has been more bountiful to me than I deserve, and in full confidence of a happy meeting with you some time in the fall.

I have not time to add more as I am surrounded with company to take leave of me. I retain an unalterable affection for you, which neither time or distance can change. My best love to Jack and Nelly, and regards to the rest of the Family, concludes me with the utmost truth and sincerity.

Your entire,

G. WASHINGTON.

On his appointment to command of the army, Washington wrote his half-brother, John Augustine: "I shall hope that my friends will visit and endeavor to keep up the spirits of my wife as much as they can, for my departure will, I know, be a cutting stroke upon her; and on this account I have many disagreeable sensations." The General also wrote Jack Custis that he thought it absolutely necessary for the peace and satisfaction of his mother that he and his wife should live at Mount Vernon during his own absence.

Mrs. Washington described herself as being "a kind of walking perambulator" during the war. She spent every winter with the General at headquarters, and said that she heard the first and last guns every season, and "marched home when the campaign was about to open." Lord Dunmore came up the Potomac to capture her, but the Virginia militia assembled in such numbers that he did not dare to attempt it. When her friends advised her to move back into the interior of the country, she said: "No, I will not desert my post." Valuables and important papers were kept in trunks, so that they could be moved at a moment's notice. In those times, when there were no telegraphs and telephones, what anxious days Martha Washington must

have spent when important operations were in progress! For instance, when the British army was landing at the head of Elk, about to fight a battle which they expected would destroy her husband's army. Late in August, 1777, while reconnoitering before the battle of the Brandywine, Washington spent the night near the Head of Elk. This was the nearest that he came to Mount Vernon during the war until, as he enters in his diary in 1781: "Sunday September 9th. I reached my own Seat at Mount Vernon (distance 120 miles from Head of Elk) where I staid till the 12th." The 10th, Washington wrote Lafayette: "We are thus far on our way to you. The Count de Rochambeau has just arrived. General Chastellux will be here and we propose, after resting to-morrow to be at Fredericksburg on the night of the 12th." It is safe to say that no more welcome visitor ever has been or will be received at Mount Vernon, for Rochambeau was in command of the army of France, and they were on their way to Yorktown. About this time, however, Mount Vernon had other visitors of distinction. As far as I know, this letter has never been published. It tells of a hurried visit paid to Mount Vernon by Generals Greene and Steuben during the Southern Campaign, and was written to Washington by General Greene.

MOUNT VERNON, *November 13th, 1780.*

Sir: I arrived here yesterday about noon, and met with a kind and hospitable reception by Mrs. Washington and all the family. Mrs. Washington, Mr. and Mrs. Custis (who are here) and Mr. Lund Washington and his Lady are all well.

We set out this morning for Richmond, and it is now so early that I am obliged to write by candlelight. Nothing but the absolute necessity of my being with my command as soon as possible should induce me to make my stay so short at your Excellency's seat, where there

is everything that nature and art can afford to render my stay happy and agreeable. Mount Vernon is one of the most pleasant places I ever saw; and I don't wonder that you languish so often to return to the pleasures of domestic life. Nothing but the glory of being Commander in Chief, and the happiness of being universally admired could compensate a person for such a sacrifice as you make. Baron Steuben is delighted with the place, and charmed with the reception we met with. Mrs. Washington sets out for camp about the middle of this week.

In March, 1781, Lafayette, who was carrying on operations in Virginia which resulted in the penning up of Cornwallis at Yorktown, came to Mount Vernon, but he was not entertained there by the General until he returned to America in 1784. Mrs. General Knox visited Mrs. Washington at Mount Vernon in October, 1781, while the siege of Yorktown was in progress.

Her active interest in the sick and wounded made Lady Washington, as the soldiers liked to call her, beloved by the army. Her only surviving child, John Parke Custis, earned the Gold Service Star when he died near Yorktown of a fever contracted at the siege. Referring to his death, Washington wrote Lafayette from Mount Vernon, where he had returned for a week in November: "This unexpected and affecting event threw Mrs. Washington and Mrs. Custis, who were both present, in such deep distress, that the circumstance of it, and a duty I owed the deceased in assisting at his funeral rites, prevented my reaching this place till the 13th." During this stay of a week at his home, Washington devoted much time to catching up with the arrears of his correspondence.

Washington resigned his commission at Annapolis, December 23, 1783, and, once more a private citizen, reached Mount Vernon with Mrs. Washington on

Christmas eve. Relatives and friends had gathered to welcome them, and the servants made the night gay with bonfires, fiddling and dancing. February 1, 1784, Washington wrote Lafayette: "At length, my dear Marquis, I am become a private citizen on the banks of Potomac, and under the shadow of my own vine and my own fig-tree, free from the bustle of a camp and the busy scenes of public life, I am solacing myself with those tranquil enjoyments, of which the soldier, who is ever in pursuit of fame, the statesman, whose watchful days and sleepless nights are spent in devising schemes to promote the welfare of his own, perhaps the ruin of other countries, as if this globe was insufficient for us all, and the courtier, who is always watching the countenance of his prince, in hopes of catching a gracious smile can have very little conception."

They were so fast locked in snow and ice after Christmas that it was not until February 11th Washington was able to go to Fredericksburg to visit his mother; he returned the 19th. April 12th Luzerne, the French minister, who was spending several days at Mount Vernon, wrote of Washington: "He dresses in a gray coat like a Virginia farmer, and nothing about him recalls the recollection of the important part which he has played, except the great number of foreigners who come to see him." Lafayette arrived in New York from France August 4, 1784, and reached Mount Vernon August 17th, where he remained twelve days. November 14th Washington went to Richmond, met Lafayette there, and the Marquis returned to Mount Vernon for a second visit of a week. November 29th Washington and Lafayette went to Annapolis, where he bade a final farewell to the Marquis.

The years from 1784 to 1789 Washington called his furlough. Brissot de Warville, who visited Mount Vernon in 1788, wrote: "Everything has an air of sim-

plicity in his house, his table is good, but not ostentatious, and no deviation is seen from regularity and domestic economy. Mrs. Washington superintends the whole, and joins to the qualities of an excellent housewife that simple dignity which ought to characterize a woman whose husband has acted the greatest part on the theatre of human affairs; while she possesses that amenity, and manifests that attention to strangers, which renders hospitality so charming." Thomas Lee Shippen wrote from Mount Vernon: "Mrs. Washington is the very essence of kindness. Her soul seems to overflow with it like the most abundant fountain and her happiness is in exact proportion to the number of objects upon which she can dispense her benefits."

More than half of the forty-six years of Washington's ownership of Mount Vernon was spent in the public service. In 1798, near the end of his life, he wrote: "Twenty-five years have passed away since I have considered myself a permanent resident beneath my own roof at Mount Vernon." During the Revolution Washington was always looking forward to the time when he could return to his beloved home. He wrote his wife: "I should enjoy more real happiness in one month with you at home than I have the most distant prospect of finding abroad if my stay were to be seven times seven years." When it became probable that he would be chosen first President of the United States, he wrote John Armstrong, April 25, 1788:

"I well remember the observation you made in your letter to me of last year, 'that my domestic retirement must suffer an interruption.' This took place, notwithstanding it was utterly repugnant to my feelings, my interests, and my wishes. I sacrificed every private consideration, and personal enjoyment, to the earnest and pressing solicitations of those, who saw and knew the alarming situation of our public concerns, and had no

other end in view but to promote the interests of their country; conceiving that under those circumstances, and at so critical a moment, an absolute refusal to act might on my part be construed as a total disregard of my country, if imputed to no worse motives. I am so wedded to a state of retirement, and find the occupations of a rural life so congenial with my feelings that to be drawn into public at my advanced age would be a sacrifice, that would admit of no compensation." When he was leaving to be inaugurated at New York, Washington wrote, April 16, 1789: "I bade adieu to Mount Vernon, to private life, and to domestic felicity." That Mrs. Washington shared her husband's regret at leaving Mount Vernon is clear from the following letter written in December, 1789: "I little thought when the war was finished that any circumstances could possibly happen which would call the General into public life again. I had anticipated that, from that moment, we should be suffered to grow old together, in solitude and tranquility. That was the first and dearest wish of my heart. I will not, however, contemplate with too much regret disappointments that were inevitable; though his feelings and my own were in perfect unison with respect to our predilections for private life, yet I cannot blame him for having acted according to his ideas of duty in obeying the voice of his country. It is owing to the kindness of our numerous friends, in all quarters, that my new and unwished for situation is not, indeed, a burden to me. When I was much younger I should probably have enjoyed the innocent gayeties of life as much as most persons of my age; but I had long since placed all the prospects of my future worldly happiness in the still enjoyments of the fireside at Mount Vernon." This is, I believe, the only letter in which the wife of a newly-elected President expresses her regret at her husband's election.

During his eight years as President in New York

and Philadelphia, Washington made such visits to Mount Vernon as official duties permitted, and he always thought: "I had rather be at Mount Vernon with a friend or two about me, than to be attended at the seat of Government by the officers of state and representatives of every power in Europe." On their return to Mount Vernon after the Presidency, Mrs. Washington wrote Mrs. Knox: "We are so penurious with our enjoyment that we are loath to share it with any one but dear friends, yet almost every day some stranger claims a portion of it, and we cannot refuse. The twilight is gathering around our lives. I am again fairly settled down to the pleasant duties of an old-fashioned Virginia housekeeper, steady as a clock, busy as a bee, and cheerful as a cricket." She wrote Mrs. Samuel Powel, of Philadelphia, that she hoped for a visit "when all things will be blooming here in the spring except the withering proprietors of the mansion."

Washington lived but two years and nine months after he retired from the Presidency, March 4, 1797. He wrote General Knox: "The remainder of my life, which in the course of nature, cannot be long, will be occupied in rural amusements; and though I shall seclude myself as much as possible from the noisy and bustling crowd, none would more than myself be regaled by the company of those I esteem at Mount Vernon; more than twenty miles from which, after I arrive there, it is not likely that I shall ever be." Washington wrote in October 1797: "An eight years absence from home (excepting short occasional visits) had so deranged my private affairs; had so despoiled my buildings; and in a word had thrown my domestic concerns into such disorder; as at no period of my life have I been more engaged than in the last six months to recover and put them in some tolerable train again." September 28, 1799, he wrote Lawrence Lewis: "It is my wish to place my estate in this county on

a new establishment, thereby bringing it into so narrow a compass as not only to supersede the necessity of a manager, but to make the management of what I retain in my own hands a healthy and agreeable amusement to look after myself, if I should not be again called to the public service of the country." Who does not sympathize with Washington when he writes McHenry: "Although I have not houses to build (except one, which I must erect for the accommodation and security of my Military, Civil and private Papers, which are voluminous and may be interesting) yet I have not one, or scarcely anything else about me that does not require considerable repairs. In a word, I am already surrounded by joiners, masons, painters, etc., etc., and such is my anxiety to get out of their hands, that I have scarcely a room to put a friend into, or to sit in myself, without the music of hammers, or the odoriferous smell of paint." The collection of Washington's manuscripts is the largest in the world in the handwriting of one man, and in 1827 Jared Sparks, with the permission of Judge Bushrod Washington, who then owned the estate, spent many weeks at Mount Vernon going over the enormous mass of them which were then there.

No man loved his home more than Washington, and yet no man was so ready to leave it at his country's call. I consider his accepting the command of the army in 1798 the most patriotic act of all his patriotic life. His fame was bright and secure; he was comfortably established at Mount Vernon, where the infirmities of age were creeping upon him; he had everything to lose and nothing to gain; no man would be shrewder than Washington in understanding this; yet he was ready to sacrifice reputation and comfort, because he thought that he might serve his country. He wrote: "As my whole life has been dedicated to my country in one shape or another, for the poor remains of it, it is not an object to

contend for ease and quiet, when all that is valuable is at stake, further than to be satisfied that the sacrifice I should make of these is acceptable and desired by my country."

Washington would have been touched by the important part which school children have borne in the restoration of Mount Vernon. He took an affectionate interest in the bringing up of youth, and there was no philanthropy for which he opened his purse more freely than education. Though God left him childless in order that he might be the Father of his Country, fondness for children was a charming characteristic, and the beautiful children and grandchildren of Mrs. Washington added joy to their life at Mount Vernon. Mrs. Fitzhugh, Washington's niece, who, as a child, was a frequent visitor to Mount Vernon, said that often, when at their games in the drawing room at night—perhaps romping, dancing and noisy—they would see the General watching their movements at some side door, enjoying their sport; and if at any time his presence seemed to check them, he would beg them not to mind him, but go on just as before, encouraging them in every possible way to continue their amusements to their hearts' content. John Parke Custis, Mrs. Washington's son, left four children, the two youngest of whom the General adopted. When in 1824 Lafayette last visited America, he told G. W. P. Custis, that he has seen him first on the portico at Mount Vernon in 1784. "A very little gentleman, with a feather in his hat, holding fast to one finger of the good general's remarkable hand, which (so large that hand!) was all, my dear sir, you could well do at that time." Nelly, the sister of George Washington Parke Custis, used to stand on tiptoe to hold the button of the General's coat while she charmed him with her girlish confidences. Nelly Custis was married to Lawrence Lewis at Mount Vernon on Washington's last birthday. At the wedding the

General wore his old continental uniform of blue and buff, and this was probably the last time he had it on. The first child of Nelly Custis was born a few days before Washington's death at Mount Vernon. Both Nelly Custis and her daughter rest at Mount Vernon. When, at the age of seventy-four, Nelly Custis died, her sister wrote: "I do not think in all our long intercourse she ever uttered a word to me that was not the most perfect kindness." Her character had been formed by Martha Washington, and the excellence of her teaching may be judged from the following verses which Nellie wrote on the death of her daughter:

TO THE MEMORY OF MY AGNES.

"Why, then, do you grieve for me mother?" she cried,
As I painted the joys of the blest;
"Why, then, do you grieve, dearest child?" I replied,
"Thou wilt go to a haven of rest."

For thee, my lost Angel, ev'n death had no sting,
And no terrors, the cold, silent grave;
Tho' thy Maker recalled thee, in life's early Spring,
He resumed but the blessing He gave.

Thy end was so peaceful, so pure was thy life,
Could a wish now restore thee again,
'Twere a sin to expose thee to perils and strife,
To a world of temptation and pain.

I cannot forget, tho' I do not repine,
That those eyes are now shrouded in death;
Which bent with the fondest affection on mine,
Till my darling resigned her last breath.

To adore thy Creator in spirit and truth,
Submissive to bow to His will,
To the close of thy life from thy earliest youth,
Thou didst then those duties fulfill.

To thy favorite beech do I often repair,
And I kiss on its bark thy dear name;
To meet thee in heaven is ever my prayer,
And my last sigh shall murmur the same.

In spite of the fact that his mother was vigorous to an advanced age, Washington wrote: "I am of a short-lived family and cannot expect to remain very long upon the earth." A few days before his death he pointed out to his nephew, Major Lewis, the spot where he intended to build the new family vault, saying: "This change I shall make the first of all for I may require it before the rest." The last entries in his diary are as follows: December 12, 1799, "Morning cloudy, wind at N. E. and Mer. 33. A large circle round the moon last night. About one o'clock it began to snow, soon after to hail and then turned to a settled cold rain. Mer. 28 at night. 13, Morning snowing and about 3 inches deep, wind at NE. and Mer. at 30 continued snowing till 1 o'clock and about 4 it became perfectly clear, wind in the same place but not hard. Mer. 28 at night." These are no doubt the last words Washington wrote. The passing of this great soul has been described by Tobias Lear, who says that, although Washington himself had been in the saddle in the storm most of Thursday the twelfth, on the evening of which he was stricken with his last illness, he considered the weather too bad to send his servant to the postoffice. "Between 2 and 3 o'clock on Saturday morning he awoke Mrs. Washington and told her he was very unwell and had an ague. She would have got up to call a servant; but he would not permit her lest she should take cold." He lay nearly four hours in a chill in a cold bedroom before anything was done or a fire lighted. When on his death bed, Washington said to Mr. Lear:

"I am afraid I shall fatigue you too much; it is a debt we must pay to each other, and I hope when you want aid of this kind, you will find it." He motioned to his attendant, Christopher, who had been standing, to take a seat by his bedside. Washington's patience, fortitude and resignation never forsook him for a moment. He said: "I am not afraid to die, and therefore can bear

the worst." The clock which was in the death chamber marked the hour 10.20 P.M., when December 14, 1799, the doctor cut the weights. On the chair by the bedside lay the open Bible from which Mrs. Washington had been reading aloud. When Mrs. Washington was told that her husband was dead, she said: "Tis well, all is now over; I shall soon follow him; I have no more trials to pass through." Henry Lee expressed, in a few beautiful words, Washington's devotion to his wife when he said in his celebrated oration: "To the dear object of his affections exemplary tender." The attic chamber with its sloping roof, which Mrs. Washington occupied for two years and a half after her husband's death, and where she died, had no fireplace, but from its window she could look out on the tomb. Consider how she was overwhelmed by its majestic presence at all hours and at all seasons; how the white radiance of eternity poured upon it as she saw it covered with snow by moonlight.

George Washington has written beautiful words of appreciation of the departed—such, for instance, as have been placed on the base of the statue of Franklin in Philadelphia. If he had composed an epitaph for Martha Washington, he might have expressed himself as Sir Thomas Lucy did, for these words that Sir Thomas wrote of his wife are exactly applicable to Lady Washington:

"All the time of her life a true and faithful servant of her good God; never detected of any crime or vice; in religion most sound; in love to her husband most faithful and true; in friendship most constant; to what in trust was committed to her most secret; in wisdom excelling; in governing her house and bringing up of youth in the fear of God that did converse with her most rare and singular. A great maintainer of hospitality; misliked of none, unless of the envious. When all is spoken that can be said, a woman so furnished and garnished

with virtue as not to be bettered, and hardly to be equalled of any. As she lived most virtuously, so she died most godly. Set down by him that best did know what hath been written to be true."

The true American at the tomb of Washington will ponder on the glorious heritage he has left us and consider his own obligation to pass on that heritage unimpaired. He will be thrilled by the awful presence of the things that are unseen and eternal. Here rests the dust of the noblest man who ever lived, and he was great because he consecrated all his magnificent powers of body, mind and soul to the utmost performance of his duty. No surer proof of the Divine guidance of America could be required than this: In her times of direst need God has never failed to give our country a man equal to the emergency, and of all these God-given men the first will always be George Washington. He needs no stately sepulchre, for he is enshrined in our hearts and his monument is our Country.

THE REGENTS AND VICE-REGENTS OF THE MOUNT VERNON LADIES' ASSOCIATION OF THE UNION SINCE ITS ORGANIZATION

MISS ANN PAMELA CUNNINGHAM

REGENT, 1853-1873

Resigned 1873; died May 1, 1875

Vice-Regents Appointed

1858

1. Mrs. Anna Cora Ogden Ritchie, resigned 1866..... Virginia
2. Mrs. Alice H. Dickinson, resigned 1859..... North Carolina
3. Mrs. Philoclea Edgeworth Eve, died 1889..... Georgia
4. Mrs. Octavia Walton LeVert, died 1877..... Alabama
5. Mrs. Catherine A. MacWillie, died 1872..... Mississippi
6. Mrs. Margaretta S. Morse, resigned 1872..... Louisiana
7. Mrs. Mary Rutledge Fogg, died 1872..... Tennessee
8. Mrs. Elizabeth M. Walton, resigned 1858..... Missouri
9. Miss Mary Norris Hamilton, resigned 1866..... New York
10. Mrs. Louisa Ingersoll Greenough, resigned 1865, Massachusetts
11. Mrs. Abba Isabella Little, resigned 1866..... Maine
12. Mrs. Catherine Willis Murat, died 1867..... Florida
13. Mrs. Mary Bootes Goodrich, resigned 1864..... Connecticut
14. Miss Phebe Ann Ogden, died 1867..... New Jersey
15. Mrs. Alice Key Pendleton, resigned 1863, died 1865..... Ohio
16. Mrs. Abby Wheaton Chace, died 1892..... Rhode Island
17. Mrs. Jane Maria Van Antwerp, died..... Iowa
18. Mrs. Margaret Ann Comegys, died 1888..... Delaware
19. Mrs. Hannah Blake Farnsworth, died 1879..... Michigan
20. Mrs. Sarah King Hale, resigned 1861..... New Hampshire
21. Mrs. Martha Mitchell, died 1902..... Wisconsin
22. Mrs. Rosa Vertner Johnson Jeffries, died 1894..... Kentucky
- Mrs. Janet M. E. Riggs, Acting Vice-Regent,
District of Columbia

1859

23. Mrs. Elizabeth Willard Barry, died 1883..... Illinois
24. Mrs. Sarah J. Sibley, died 1869..... Minnesota
25. Mrs. Mary Pepperell Jarvis Cutts, resigned 1878..... Vermont
26. Miss Lily Lytle Macalester, died 1891..... Pennsylvania

27. Mrs. Magdalen G. Blanding, resigned 1884..... California
28. Mrs. Harriet B. Fitch, died 1880..... Indiana
29. Mrs. Sarah H. Johnson, died 1866..... Arkansas
30. Mrs. Letitia Harper Walker, died 1908..... North Carolina

1860

31. Mrs. Ann Lucas Hunt, died 1878..... Missouri
32. Mrs. Mary Chestnut, died 1867..... North Carolina

1866

33. Mrs. Margaret J. M. Sweat, died 1908..... Maine
34. Miss Emily L. Harper, died 1891..... Maryland
35. Mrs. Lucy H. Pickens, died August, 1899..... South Carolina
36. Mrs. M. E. Hickman, resigned 1874..... Nevada
37. Mrs. M. A. Stearns, resigned 1873..... New Hampshire
38. Mrs. Emily R. M. Hewson, resigned 1872..... Ohio
39. Miss Ella Hutchins, resigned 1872..... Texas

1867

40. Mrs. Janet M. C. Riggs, resigned 1868... District of Columbia
41. Mrs. Maria Brooks, resigned 1876..... New York
42. Mrs. Matilda W. Emory, resigned 1873, District of Columbia

1868

43. Mrs. Nancy Wade Halsted, died 1891..... New Jersey
44. Mrs. Nannie C. Yulee, died 1884..... Florida

1870

45. Mrs. Susan E. Johnson Hudson, died 1913..... Connecticut
46. Mrs. Ella Bassett Washington, died 1898..... West Virginia

1872

47. Mrs. Betsey C. Mason, died 1873..... Virginia
48. Mrs. A. P. Dillon, resigned 1873, died 1898..... Iowa
49. Mrs. C. L. Scott, resigned 1878..... Arkansas

1873

50. Mrs. William Balfour, resigned 1875..... Mississippi
51. Mrs. Mary T. Barnes, died 1912..... District of Columbia
52. Mrs. David Urquehart, resigned 1876..... Louisiana
53. Miss M. E. Maverick, resigned 1873..... Texas

This was the last appointment of Miss Cunningham, First Regent.

MRS. LILY M. BERGHMAN

(Made Acting Regent, 1873, and Regent, June, 1874)

SECOND REGENT

Died 1891

Vice-Regents Appointed

1874

54. Mrs. Emma Read Ball, died 1918.....Virginia
55. Mrs. Aaron V. Brown, died 1889.....Tennessee

1875

56. Mrs. Lily L. Broadwell, died 1889.....Ohio
57. Mrs. John P. Jones, resigned 1876.....Nevada

1876

58. Mrs. Jennie Meeker Ward, died 1910.....Kansas
59. Mrs. Justine Van Rensselaer Townsend, died 1912..New York

1878

60. Mrs. J. Gregory Smith, resigned 1884.....Vermont

1879

61. Miss Alice M. Longfellow.....Massachusetts
62. Mrs. Robert Campbell, died 1882.....Missouri

1880

63. Mrs. Ida A. Richardson, died 1910.....Louisiana

1882

64. Mrs. Ella S. Harbert, died 1884.....Alabama

1885

65. Mrs. Elizabeth B. Adams Rathbone, resigned 1918...Michigan
66. Mrs. Mary T. Leiter, died 1913.....Illinois
67. Mrs. Janet Dekay King, died 1896.....Vermont
68. Mrs. Elizabeth Woodward, died 1897.....Kentucky

1888

69. Miss Harriet Clayton Comegys.....Delaware
70. Mrs. Fannie Gilchrist Baker, died 1901.....Florida

69

HARVARD UNIVERSITY
WIDENER LIBRARY

1913

Mrs. Horace Mann Towner.....Iowa
Mrs. Thomas P. Denham.....Florida

1914

Miss Harriet L. Huntress.....New Hampshire
Mrs. Charles Eliot Furness.....Minnesota
Mrs. Benjamin D. Walcott.....Indiana
Mrs. Lucien M. Hanks.....Wisconsin

1915

Miss Annie Burr Jennings.....Connecticut
Mrs. Willard Hall Bradford.....New Jersey

1916

Mrs. Charles Nagel.....Missouri
Mrs. George A. Carpenter.....Illinois
Miss Mary Govan Billups.....Mississippi
Mrs. John V. Abrahams, resigned 1921.....Kansas

1919

Mrs. William Ewen Shipp.....North Carolina
Mrs. Horton Pope.....Colorado
Mrs. Charles J. Livingood.....Ohio
Mrs. Jefferson Randolph Anderson.....Georgia
Mrs. Celsus Price Perrie.....Arkansas

1920

Mrs. Horace Van Deventer.....Tennessee
Mrs. Charles S. Wheeler.....California

1921

Mrs. William Ruffin Cox.....Virginia